CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1 1.   A method, in a requested file system server, for

2 servicing a request, comprising:

3   receiving a request for a referencing object from a

4 client, wherein the referencing object refers to a

5 referenced file system;

6   looking up a location of the referenced file system

7 in a separate data structure; and

8   returning a redirection message indicating the

9 location of the referenced file system to the client.

1 2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the redirection

2 message includes an address of a referenced file system

3 server.

1 3.   The method of claim 2, wherein the redirection

2 message further includes a path.

1 4.   The method of claim 2, wherein the referencing

2 object has a file system identifier.

1 5.   The method of claim 4, further comprising:

2   encoding the file system identifier,

3   wherein the redirection message further includes the

4 encoded file system identifier.

1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the referencing

2 object is a top level object for a uniform namespace

3 including all file systems on participating file system

4 servers.

1 7. The method of claim 2, wherein the referenced file

2 system server is the requested file system server.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the separate data

2 structure comprises a file system location database.

1 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 receiving a redirected request for a file system

3 object;

4 identifying an encoded file system identifier in the

5 redirected request;

6 decoding the encoded file system identifier to form

7 a file system identifier corresponding to a requested

8 file system;

9 looking up a path for the requested file system in a

10 file system identifier data structure; and

11 retrieving the root of the requested file system

12 using the path for the requested file system.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the file system

2 identifier data structure comprises a file system

3 identifier table.

1   11.   The method of claim 9, wherein the separate data

2   structure and the file system identifier data structure

3   are stored in a file system location database.

1   12.   The method of claim 1, wherein the referencing

2   object is a top level object for a uniform namespace

3   including all file systems on participating file system

4   servers.

1   13.   A method, in a requested file system server, for

2   servicing a request, comprising:

3   receiving a request for a file system object,

4   wherein the request includes an encoded file system

5   identifier;

6   decoding the encoded file system identifier to form

7   a file system identifier corresponding to a requested

8   file system;

9   looking up a path for the requested file system in a

10   file system identifier data structure; and

11   retrieving the root of the requested file system

12   using the path for the requested file system.

1   14.   The method of claim 13, wherein the file system

2   identifier data structure is stored in a table.

1   15.   The method of claim 13, wherein the file system

2   identifier data structure is stored in a file system

3   location database.

1 16. An apparatus, in a requested file system server, for

2 servicing a request, comprising:

3   receipt means for receiving a request for a

4 referencing object from a client, wherein the referencing

5 object refers to a referenced file system;

6   location means for looking up a location of the

7 referenced file system in a separate data structure; and

8   return means for returning a redirection message

9 indicating the location of the referenced file system to

10 the client.

1 17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the redirection

2 message includes an address of a referenced file system

3 server.

1 18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the redirection

2 message further includes a path.

1 19. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the referencing

2 object has a file system identifier.

1 20. The apparatus of claim 19, further comprising:

2   encoding means for encoding the file system

3 identifier,

4   wherein the redirection message further includes the

5 encoded file system identifier.

1   21.   The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the referencing

2   object is a top level object for a uniform namespace

3   including all file systems on participating file system

4   servers.

1   22.   The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the referenced

2   file system server is the requested file system server.

1   23.   The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the separate data

2   structure comprises a file system location database.

1   24.   The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:

2   means for receiving a redirected request for a file

3   system object;

4   means for identifying an encoded file system

5   identifier in the redirected request;

6   means for decoding the encoded file system

7   identifier to form a file system identifier corresponding

8   to a requested file system;

9   means for looking up a path for the requested file

10   system in a file system identifier data structure; and

11   means for retrieving the root of the requested file

12   system using the path for the requested file system.

1   25.   The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the file system

2   identifier data structure comprises a file system

3   identifier table.

1 26. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the separate data
2 structure and the file system identifier data structure
3 are stored in a file system location database.

1 27. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the referencing
2 object is a top level object for a uniform namespace
3 including all file systems on participating file system
4 servers.

1 28. An apparatus, in a requested file system server, for
2 servicing a request, comprising:
3   receipt means for receiving a request for a file
4 system object, wherein the request includes an encoded
5 file system identifier;
6   decoding means for decoding the encoded file system
7 identifier to form a file system identifier corresponding
8 to a requested file system;
9   path means for looking up a path for the requested
10 file system in a file system identifier data structure;
11 and
12   retrieval means for retrieving the root of the
13 requested file system using the path for the requested
14 file system.

1 29. The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the file system
2 identifier data structure is stored in a table.

1   30.   The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the file system

2   identifier data structure is stored in a file system

3   location database.

1   31.   A computer program product, in a computer readable

2   medium, for servicing a request, comprising:

3   instructions for receiving a request for a

4   referencing object from a client, wherein the referencing

5   object refers to a referenced file system;

6   instructions for looking up a location of the

7   referenced file system in a separate data structure; and

8   instructions for returning a redirection message

9   indicating the location of the referenced file system to

10   the client.

1   32.   A computer program product, in a computer readable

2   medium, for servicing a request, comprising:

3   instructions for receiving a request for a file

4   system object, wherein the request includes an encoded

5   file system identifier;

6   instructions for decoding the encoded file system

7   identifier to form a file system identifier corresponding

8   to a requested file system;

9   instructions for looking up a path for the requested

10   file system in a file system identifier data structure;

11   and

12   instructions for retrieving the root of the

13 requested file system using the path for the requested

14 file system.